



**NORTH DAKOTA**  
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:  
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### **Cases of Cipro-Resistant Meningococcal Bacteria Found in Eastern North Dakota and Northwestern Minnesota**

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health and the Minnesota Department of Health today notified physicians about a strain of meningococcal bacteria resistant to quinolone antibiotics, including ciprofloxacin (cipro), commonly used for prevention of disease according to Kirby Kruger, state epidemiologist with the North Dakota Department of Health.

So far, the strain has been discovered in three cases in eastern North Dakota and northwestern Minnesota. The first case of cipro-resistant *Neisseria meningitidis* (meningococcal) disease occurred in eastern North Dakota in January 2007. Within the last month, two cases were reported in northwestern Minnesota. In all three cases, the bacteria strain appears to be the same; however, no common links among the people themselves have yet been found.

The North Dakota and Minnesota departments of health are asking health-care providers in eastern North Dakota and northwestern Minnesota to use rifampin, ceftriaxone or azithromycin as preventive treatment for people who have had close contact with someone who has meningococcal disease.

Cipro traditionally has been the antibiotic used most often for prevention of meningococcal disease. Although cipro-resistant meningococcal has been found in other countries, these are the first reported cases in the United States. The North Dakota and Minnesota departments of health and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are conducting further investigations, including collecting samples from people in the area. These samples will be tested for the resistant organism.

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Although most people exposed to the meningococcal bacteria do not become seriously ill, some may develop meningitis, bloodstream infections and other serious infections. Symptoms include fever, headache, vomiting, stiff neck and a rash. Meningitis can cause sensitivity to light, confusion, drowsiness, seizures and sometimes coma. Occasionally, the disease can be fatal.

To help prevent meningococcal disease, the Department of Health recommends the following:

- Although the type of meningococcal disease currently under investigation is not covered by the meningococcal vaccine, it is important for children ages 11 through 18 and college freshman living in dormitories to get vaccinated. The vaccine does protect against four other common types of meningitis.
- Because the meningococcal bacteria is spread by close, direct contact with nose or throat secretions, people of all ages should avoid sharing drinking glasses, eating utensils, toothbrushes and drinks.
- Wash hands with warm, soapy water frequently.

For more information, contact Kirby Kruger, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.2378. Information about meningococcal disease is available on the Department of Health's website at [www.ndhealth.gov/disease](http://www.ndhealth.gov/disease).

-- 30 --

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